in terms of ground water pollution. About 11 million tons of salt per year are brought to the surface by the oil and gas industry. Other major sources of ground water contamination that cause problems in this state are agricultural nonpoint drainage, storage or disposal of either solid or liquid waste or hazardous materials, mineralized water intrusion, accidental spills, landfills, underground storage tanks, underground pipelines, injection/enhanced recovery wells, industrial disposal wells, chemigation (chemicals added to irrigation water), and mineral mining.

Ground Water Management and Protection

Kansas has long supported programs for the protection of the environment. Specific legislation for the protection of ground water was first enacted in 1931. The state has five agencies administering laws spread over five chapters of the statutes with an annual expenditure of $12 million and a staff of more than 350 persons involved in water regulation related to quality.

The regulation of wells that penetrate into or through ground water is handled by three different agencies. Oil and gas regulation is administered by the Kansas Corporation Commission, which has a mandate to protect fresh ground water supplies from adverse effects of mineral development activities. The Kansas State Board of Agriculture issues permits for water withdrawals and administers laws related to conservation and use of water resources, including appropriation of ground water; it also assists with the organization of Ground Water Management Districts. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has regulatory authority over matters dealing with public water supplies and water pollution. It is also responsible for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting ground water quality data; developing water quality management plans; and responding to emergency water pollution problems,

The main elements of a ground water protection strategy are found in the state's public health, environmental, and conservation laws. Parts of the strategy are expanded upon in the Kansas Water Plan, the Water Quality Management Plan, and the Ground Water Quality Management Plan.

Kansas also has Ground Water Management Districts that are locally managed political subdivisions of the state and were formed as a result of the Ground Water Management District Act of 1972. There are currently five of these districts: (1) western Kansas, (2) Equus beds, (3) southwest Kansas, (4) northwest Kansas, and (5) Big Bend. Each district is charged with managing ground water resources within its boundaries.

The involvement of ground water management districts represents a careful effort to get more local involvement in decision-making and has